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ABSTRACT

This document contains four papers from a symposium on management development. "The Effect of Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship on Subordinate Performance, Role Ambiguity and Conflict, and Job Satisfaction" (Michael J. Nocera, Judith A. Kolb) finds that a strong perceived relationship with supervisors was negatively correlated with role ambiguity and conflict and positively correlated with job satisfaction; no significant relationship was found between the relationship and sales performance. "A Pilot Study of Career Development Issues of African-American Women Serving as First-line Supervisors" (Michele E. Cushnie) reveals the unique challenges faced by such women and identifies these factors for success: process used to prepare for career progression, opportunity to progress, work, success after progression into possession, and supervisory forums. "Human Resource Development Professionals' Perceptions of Reasons for Downsizing and Training Strategies Developed for Middle Managers" (Willard Wright, John Niemi) finds downsizing has little impact on training strategies that participating organizations developed for their middle managers. "Perceived Leadership Style and Individual Differences as Predictors of Subordinate Information Seeking Behavior" (Svjetlana Madzar) uses transformational and transactional leadership theories to postulate that the content type and frequency of information sought by a subordinate from his/her superior will vary depending on that superior's leadership style. (YLB)

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Management Development**Chair: Martin Mulder, University of Twente**

The Effect of Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship on Subordinate Performance,
Role Ambiguity and Conflict, and Job Satisfaction

Michael J. Nocera, Pennsylvania State University

Judith A. Kolb, Pennsylvania State University

A Pilot Study of Career Development Issues of African-American Women
Serving as First-line Supervisors

Michele E. Cushnie, Ohio State University

Human Resource Development Professionals' Perceptions of Reasons for
Downsizing and Training Strategies Developed for Middle Managers

Willard Wright, Caterpillar, Inc.

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Perceived Leadership Style and Individual Differences as Predictors of
Subordinate Information Seeking Behavior

Syjetlana Madzar, Gustavus Adolphus College



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2A

The Effect of Supervisor/Subordinate Relationship on Subordinate Performance, Role Ambiguity and Conflict, and Job Satisfaction

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This study examined the effect of relationships formed between supervisors and their subordinates on objective measures of subordinate performance and self-reported measures of subordinates' role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction. Data were gathered from sales representatives of a snack food company. A strong perceived relationship with supervisors was negatively correlated with role ambiguity and conflict and positively correlated with job satisfaction. No significant relationship was found between the supervisor/subordinate relationship and sales performance.

One way of thinking about the effect of leadership on subordinate performance and affective states in modern organizations is suggested by the leader-member exchange (LMX) model (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982) first proposed by Graen and his colleagues as the Vertical Dyad Linkage theory (Dansereau, Cashman, & Graen, 1973). In this model, the focus is on the quality of the dyadic relationship between leader and subordinate. The LMX approach to leadership, grounded in role theory, posits that leaders and individual subordinates engage in a role development process during which time understandings are reached concerning decision latitude, influence, and the degree of autonomy each subordinate has (Graen & Cashman, 1975). Leader-member exchange can also be understood in terms of social exchange theory. The leader exchanges his or her personal and positional resources in return for the organizational contributions of the subordinate. In terms of Bass' (1990) transactional and transformation leadership model (based on Burns, 1978), LMX might be considered both transactional and transformational. "It begins as transactional social exchange and evolves into transformation social exchange" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 238). At its highest level, LMX allows managers to create "long-term commitment from followers to the organization" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 239).

Initially, the relationship a leader develops with an individual employee is based on such elements as employee competence, dependability, and interpersonal compatibility (Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987). Employees who enjoy high-quality exchanges with leaders (and, hence, are likely to become in-group members) have relationships characterized by high trust, mutual influence, support, and formal and informal rewards. Out-group members, on the other hand, have low-quality relationships characterized by low trust, formal authority, and limited support and rewards. In some studies (e.g., Graen & Cashman, 1975), a third category is identified—middle-group individuals who have neither particularly favorable nor unfavorable relationships with their supervisors. The leader-member exchange relationship tends to develop fairly quickly and remains stable (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980).

Supporters of LMX argue that to study leadership in organizations, the assumption that all subordinates are treated alike by the supervisor must be replaced with an approach that centers on the dyadic relationship between supervisor and subordinate. This relationship determines, in large part, the role each subordinate will play within a particular organizational unit (Graen, 1976). Individuals (leaders) having a vested interest in the role performance of another individual exert pressure on the individual in the form of a role expectation episode (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Through a series of such episodes, each subordinate defines what his or her role behavior will be. The relationship between LMX and performance is especially important, since "the theoretical development of the model stresses the leader's need for efficiency and performance as one cause of differential LMX relationships" (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p. 622).

LMX and Performance

Some researchers (e.g., Liden & Graen, 1980; Vecchio & Gobdel, 1984) have observed that performance ratings of in-group members are higher than those of out-group members. Performance ratings may be subject to rater bias, however. Supervisors' ratings of subordinates may be influenced by a variety of personal and contextual factors (Banks & Murphy, 1985; Fried & Tieg, 1995; Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell, & McKellin, 1993). Vecchio (1982) suggests that independent performance measures, in lieu of subjective performance ratings, are necessary to test the effect of LMX on subordinate performance.

Few past studies have examined the relationship between LMX and performance, possibly because objective measures of performance are difficult to obtain, and results of these studies have been inconclusive. Graen, Novak, and Sommerkamp (1982) and Scandura and Graen (1984) reported that in-group members were higher performers when performance was measured objectively. Vecchio (1982) and Vecchio and Gobdel (1984), however, failed to detect a significant difference between objective measures of in-group and out-group performance, although the difference reported was in the expected direction.

An advantage of studying LMX in a sales environment is that objective measures of performance (e.g., sales commission income and sales volume) are available. Castleberry and Tanner (1986) suggest that LMX theory has great potential as a tool for understanding and managing a sales force because sales performance may ultimately depend on the quality of the exchange relationship between sales manager and salesperson. Sales usually entail less direct supervision and greater latitude in directing activity than many jobs, but sales performance can differ as a function of territory allocation and sales budget or quota and could be linked strongly to a salesperson's ability to make concessions to satisfy customers--concessions that generally need to be approved by the salesperson's supervisor.

Little research attention has been directed to the interaction of the salesperson and sales manager (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985). Castleberry and Tanner (1986) reported that in-group sales people receive more pertinent information (e.g., new products, names of highly qualified prospects, proposed changes) from their sales managers and more support (e.g., better territories, more specialized training, more realistic quotas, more generous expense accounts, more concessions for customers), as well as exhibit higher productivity than out-group members. Other studies (Tanner & Castleberry, 1990; Lagace, 1990), however, produced no evidence of a positive relationship between LMX and sales performance.

Although findings from past studies have been inconclusive, it seems reasonable to expect that salespeople might earn higher commission income as a result of receiving preferred territories, specialized training, and other forms of support from a supervisor. Thus,

- H1: In-group members will exhibit higher sales performance, as measured by sales commission income, than out-group members.*

Role Ambiguity and Conflict

Graen, Orris, and Johnson (1973) state that roles are ambiguously and incompletely specified and "must be completed or defined by the organization's participants" (p. 396). The role-making process is based on the exchange of support between supervisor and subordinate. As communication and work output are exchanged along with social support, roles within the relationship are defined. Both role ambiguity and role conflict have been found to be associated with low work control (Tetrick & LaRocco, 1987). Individuals experiencing role conflict believe that demands placed upon them are often excessive and contradictory in nature. Castleberry and Tanner (1986) and Tanner and Castleberry (1990) found that in-group members experienced less role conflict and role ambiguity than out-group members. A similar result was expected for this study. Hence, the following hypothesis:

- H2: In-group members will report less role ambiguity and less role conflict than out-group members.*

Job Satisfaction

Studies in non-sales settings indicate that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and the in-group/out-group status of a member (Graen & Ginsburgh, 1977; Graen, Liden, & Hoel, 1982; Vecchio & Gobdel, 1984), with in-group members reporting higher levels of overall satisfaction. In addition, role stress appears to have a negative relationship with job satisfaction in sales situations (Tanner & Castleberry, 1990; Teas, 1983). Most previous studies have considered satisfaction as unidimensional. This study adds to the literature by examining seven different indices of satisfaction.

The following hypotheses concern relationships between satisfaction and LMX:

- H3: In-group members will report higher scores on measures of job satisfaction than will out-group members.*

Method

Sample. Questionnaires were distributed to 154 route sales representatives of a potato chip and pretzel company located in the Middle Atlantic region of the United States. Eighty-four questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 54 percent. Eighty questionnaires contained usable information. The remaining four were incomplete or otherwise deficient. On the basis of information supplied by corporate executives, each questionnaire was coded with a number from 5 to 1 (high to low, indicating sales commission income) prior to distribution to the representatives. Respondents were told that each questionnaire contained an income code but that individual identity could not be determined from these codes. The number of usable questionnaires received per commission category was as follows: high, 17; above average, 12; average, 20; below average, 16; and low, 15.

Leader-member Exchange (LMX) Measure. The most consistently used measure of leader-member exchange, the seven-item LMX-7 (Graen & Scandura, 1987), was used in this study. Internal reliability as measured by Cronbach's alpha was .89. Participants used a five-point scale in the Likert format to respond to seven individual items. Scores were then totaled and averaged to arrive at LMX scores. Questions included: "How well do you feel that your supervisor understands your job problems and needs?" (5, a great deal; 1, not at all), "Regardless of how much formal authority your supervisor has built into his or her position, what are the chances that he or she would be personally inclined to use that power to help you solve problems in your work?" (5, very high; 1, none), and "How would you characterize your working relationship with your supervisor?" (5, extremely effective; 1, extremely ineffective). Individuals who scored above the median were classified as in-group members; those below the median, out-group members.

Work-related Satisfaction Measure. The revised 28-item version of INDSALES (Comer, Machleit, & Lagace, 1989), developed from the original 95-item instrument (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1974), was used in this study to assess satisfaction. Work-related satisfaction in seven areas was measured: supervision, job, management/company policy, promotion, pay, fellow workers, and company. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from .70 - .91. Items were scored on a 5-point scale (5, strongly agree; 1, strongly disagree). Questions included the following: "My sales supervisor lives up to his or her promises" (supervision), "My work gives me a sense of accomplishment" (job), "Top management really knows its job" (management/company policy), "There are plenty of good jobs here for those who want to get ahead" (promotion), "I'm paid fairly compared with other employees in this company" (pay), "The people I work with are very friendly" (fellow workers), and "My customers are understanding" (customers).

Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict Measures. Role ambiguity and role conflict were assessed by means of a 26-item questionnaire developed by Behrman and Perreault (1984). The first eighteen items relate to role conflict; the remaining eight items to role ambiguity. In this study, reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were .88 and .66, respectively. Items were assessed on a 1-5 continuum. Role conflict questions included the following: "My sales supervisor makes requests of me which conflict with each other," "In my job, I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others," and "I frequently have much more to do than I can handle during the time available at work." Role ambiguity questions included:

"Clear, planned goals and objectives exist in my job," "I know exactly what is expected of me by my supervisors," and "When given an unfamiliar assignment, the explanation of what has to be done is very clear to me."

This study involved data only from subordinates. The inclusion of leader responses in future research might be useful in determining whether leaders and individual subordinates describe their dyadic relationships in similar or dissimilar terms.

Results and Discussion

The descriptive statistics for the measures used in this study appear in Table 1. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranged from .66 to .91 and were considered sufficiently high for research purposes (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients for Measures

<i>Description</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Reliability Coefficient</i>
LMX	3.51	.218	.89
Role Ambiguity	2.30	.416	.66
Role Conflict	2.50	.326	.88
Satisfaction with:			
Supervisor	3.49	.277	.81
Work	3.45	.169	.91
Management	3.01	.070	.87
Promotion	2.48	.304	.79
Pay	2.80	.361	.73
Coworker	3.76	.237	.70
Customer	3.46	.112	.79

Note: All scores are based on a five-point scale.

Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between in-group/out-group status and sales performance as operationalized by sales commission income. Biseria correlations ($r_{bis} = .02$, *ns*) indicated a negligible relationship between LMX and sales commission income. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 posited that in-group members would report less role ambiguity and less role conflict in their jobs. Biseria correlations indicated a significant negative relationship between in-group/out-group status and role ambiguity ($r_{bis} = -.47$, $p < .001$) and between in-group/out-group status and role conflict ($r_{bis} = -.42$, $p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 stated that in-group members would report greater satisfaction than out-group members on seven indices of satisfaction. Biseria correlations indicated support for Hypothesis 3 for three of the seven dimensions of satisfaction: supervisor satisfaction ($r_{bis} = .78$, $p < .001$), management satisfaction ($r_{bis} = .34$, $p < .001$), and satisfaction with promotion ($r_{bis} = .43$; $p < .001$). Correlational data pertaining to Hypotheses 3 appear in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlations Among Leader Member Exchange, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict and Satisfaction Measures
N=80

Description	LMX	Role Ambiguity	Role Conflict
Satisfaction with:			
Supervision	.78***	-.45***	-.40***
Work	.12	-.25*	-.29**
Management	.34**	-.29**	-.44***
Promotion	.43***	-.11	-.34***
Pay	.18	-.08	-.11
Coworker	.06	-.15	-.22*
Customer	.18	-.05	-.11

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

LMX and Performance. There was no significant relationship between in-group/out-group status and performance. This finding is consistent with those of two recent studies (Lagace, 1990; Tanner & Castleberry, 1990), although Castleberry and Tanner (1986) reported that in-group members exhibited higher performance. Certainly more research is needed on the relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinate performance; however, the results of this study and the two most recent studies (Lagace, 1990; Tanner & Castleberry, 1990) appear to indicate that, for outside salespeople, leader-member exchange has no significant relationship to objective measures of performance. The reasons for this lack of relationship are interesting to explore, especially in terms of implications for future studies.

First, in a sales organization, salespersons typically perform almost all their work away from their supervisors' physical presence. This lack of an on-going face-to-face relationship may, by itself, explain the lack of impact the supervisor has on direct sales by the sales staff. The salesperson's own initiative and sales ability may be of primary importance. As technology increasingly allows more and more employees to work at geographically-dispersed locations, the distance relationship shared by supervisors and sales staff may become more common for employees working in a variety of types of jobs. Future research should examine the effect of LMX on performance when opportunities to engage in a day-to-day relationship are limited.

Second, although LMX exchange posits that in-group members receive more support from supervisors, support, for the participants in this study, may not have translated into their receiving better sales territories. In-group/out-group relationships do not take an excessive amount of time to develop (Lagace, 1990). A salesperson who has been with the company for a short period of time may be an in-group member but not have the seniority needed to be assigned to the larger more productive routes. It seems reasonable that new people, regardless of their relationship with their supervisor, would not do as well as established sales people with more productive territories. Since demographic information on longevity with the company was not collected on this sample (because of a concern that identifying information would negatively affect response rate), we have no way of controlling for this effect.

A third explanation is closely related to the territory issue addressed above. There is an assumption implicit in LMX theory that a subordinate's supervisor has the ability to provide substantial resources such as extensive training, generous expense accounts, customer perks and concessions, and/or other tangible measures of support to favored subordinates. This may not have been the case in the sales organization in this study and certainly, sales supervisors are not the only managers who have constraints placed on their allocation of resources and rewards. In organizations with matrix structure, for example, a project supervisor often has little control over the organizational rewards given to her or his subordinates. Those decisions are made by functional managers. In today's climate of budget cuts and downsizing, supervisors have fewer

resources with which to reward subordinates, favored or otherwise. The effect of these diminished resources on the balance in the leader-member exchange relationship remains to be seen.

Regardless of whether future research finds that LMX has a direct effect on performance, LMX may have an indirect effect on performance that is not readily apparent. For instance, a supervisor who acts as a mentor may influence a subordinate's future job performance. One who introduces a subordinate to a variety of individuals within and/or outside the organization could substantially increase the subordinate's professional network in terms of colleagues, superiors in the organization, and potential clients. In this way, the initial transactional nature of LMX may evolve into the transformation relationship suggested by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Such possibilities merit further inquiries.

LMX and Role Ambiguity/Role Conflict. In this study, in-group members reported less role ambiguity than out-group members. These results support earlier findings (Tanner & Castleberry, 1990; Tanner, Dunn, & Chonko, 1993) that in-group/out-group status is negatively related to role ambiguity. In-group members have a better understanding than out-group members of role requirements. One explanation may be that in-group members engage in more frequent and more precise communication with supervisors than do out-group members. Also, it may be that in-group members are not as apprehensive as out-group members about approaching supervisors with problems encountered on the job.

In-group members also reported less role conflict than out-group members. This finding is consistent with previous research (Lagace, 1991; Tanner & Castleberry, 1990). Because in-group members receive more attention and support than out-group members (Vecchio & Gobdel, 1984), in-group members are expected to experience less role conflict. The findings of this study support that view. Tanner and Castleberry (1990) state that as exchange quality improves, so should understanding of role requirements. This greater understanding should reduce perceptions of role stress.

LMX and Satisfaction. The relationship between in-group/out-group status and satisfaction received partial support for three of the seven dimensions of satisfaction. Not surprisingly, the strongest correlation in this study was that between in-group/out-group status and satisfaction with supervisor. It appears that in-group members, who have a more positive relationship with both supervision and management, view their positions in the organization and their likelihood for promotion more favorably than do out-group members. A supportive supervisor-subordinate dyadic relationship, then, may help to reduce turnover. Graen and Ginsburgh (1977) and Graen, Liden, and Hoel (1982) observed less turnover when leader-member exchange relationships were strong. One should exercise caution, however, not to overemphasize the link between turnover and leadership. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Bycio, Allen, and Hackett (1995) found that characteristics of the organization had a stronger association with turnover than did aspects of transformational leadership.

The relationship between in-group membership and promotion satisfaction, however, should also lead organizations to examine performance evaluation procedures to ensure that favored employees are not receiving better evaluations than their performance merits, especially in light of the nonsignificant relationship between LMX and objective measures of job performance.

Implications for HRD

In today's economy, more and more businesses are searching for non-monetary ways to improve employee performance, morale, and job satisfaction. Supervisory training programs that emphasize the importance of conveying clear, concise job roles and responsibilities and establishing open lines of communication with all employees might help in all three areas. Attention also could be focused on supervisory behaviors and practices that lead employees to believe that they have a favorable (or unfavorable) relationship with their supervisors. An important finding in this study was that in-group members were more satisfied with management, supervision, and promotion policies, and that they reported less role ambiguity and role conflict than out-group members.

As more employees work away from the direct supervision of their managers, more information is needed on the effect of that lack of face-to-face interaction. Discussions in organizations about what subordinates want and need from their supervisors would be useful for

HRD professionals facing decisions about how to help employees work successfully in distant locations.

This study also raises questions relevant for career development. Do in-group members receive better mentoring and greater exposure to organizational and external networks than out-group members? What effect do these opportunities have on long-term job performance?

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A Pilot Study of Career Development Issues of African-American Women Serving as First-line Supervisors

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This study explored the career development issues of African-American women who are first-line supervisors. A qualitative research design was used in which face-to-face interviews were conducted with a sample of five first-line supervisors. The questions focused on the participants' perceptions of the organization's career development program; factors that motivate them to perform on the job; and factors that hinder and facilitate their career progress. The study revealed that this group of women face unique challenges. Factors for success and implications for HRD are discussed.

Human resource development (HRD) practitioners are reevaluating how they develop their employees to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 1994). One group of employees that serve critical roles within the organization is the first-line supervisor. This group is responsible for the employees who produce the organization's goods and services (Harrison, 1994).

Increasingly African-American women are becoming a larger part of the supervisory ranks because opportunities that were previously denied to minorities and women are now attainable (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993). As more women enter the workforce, they will accumulate work experience and complete management and professional education programs (Larwood & Wood, 1995). African-American women may have differing career development experiences, especially if programs are unstructured. Therefore, they may require a different approach to their career development process.

Problem Statement

The career development of individual supervisors is very important to the success or failure of an organization. First-line supervisors are the most important management level of the organization because they have contact with the operating employees, the people who ultimately determine the success of the organization (Harrison, 1994).

Previous research has shown that employees benefit differentially from career development experiences provided by their organizations, and that race and gender may account for some of these differences (Diamond, 1987; Marshall, 1994; Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995). In particular, an increasing number of African-American women, as a category of employees, are becoming more and more prevalent in organizations, especially at the first-line supervisory levels (US Department of Labor, 1991). This is often perceived as good by the organizations because they present new opportunities and challenges (Cox & Blake, 1991). However, the contributions of these individuals are likely to be diminished, in part, because of whatever perceptions they might have of the career development process and programs of their organizations.

Supervisory development is critical to the successful organization. Because of their unique background and views, African-American women could be perceived to view career development offerings differently from their white counterparts merely because of their differences in experiences, perceptions, and responses based on gender and race. More needs to be known about the career development of African-American women as first-line supervisors, because knowing this will help organizations develop appropriate career development strategies for all employees.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions, motivations, barriers and facilitators of African American women's career development in the retail industry. From the organization's

perspective, this information is critical for at least two reasons. First, it would provide greater insights on the career motivations of African-American women and their perceptions of the organization's approaches to career development. Second, this information would help human resource development practitioners plan and implement more effective career development programs, which would benefit African-American women and other front-line supervisors.

For the purpose of this study, the supervisor was a first-line person who managed nonmanagement employees to achieve the objectives of the organization (Harrison, 1994). The supervisor reported to a mid-management or upper management person.

Questions for Investigation

Five female African-American first-line supervisors were chosen to address the following questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of African-American women on the career development programs in the organizations?
- 2) What motivates African-American women to perform on the job?
- 3) What factors serve as barriers to career progress do African-American women encounter?
- 4) What factors facilitate the career progress of African-American women?

Method

The individual case study research design was used (Yin, 1994; Patton, 1990). The purpose of the case study is gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information (Patton, 1990) about each female African-American first-line supervisor. This allowed for face-to-face interviews with a purposeful sample of the supervisors. The interviews produced qualitative data of their experiences, beliefs, attitudes and thoughts.

Instrument. An interview schedule was developed to collect data (Patton, 1990). The interview schedule consisted of questions which were divided into five sections: career motivation, career development, barriers, facilitators and personal information.

Sample and Data Collection. Research was conducted at a large mid-western organization which receives, stores, and ships retail and catalog merchandise. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with five first-line supervisors. The interviewer contacted the human resource department of several large organizations that had a large number of front-line employees, who reported to front-line supervisors. One organization was willing and able to work with the researcher at the proposed time. The organization had seven first-line African-American supervisors who were women. The researcher wanted to conduct interviews with all seven of the supervisors, but the busy schedules of two of them made it impossible.

Initial contact was made with the organization through a mid-manager of Human Resources Management Department. A proposal of research study and a copy of the interview schedule were handed to her. It was through her that the appointments for interviews were made. The interviews were conducted on site in a small conference office. The interviewees were aware of the purpose and intentions of the study. The interviews lasted approximately one hour and focused on the perceptions of the supervisors on the career development strategies of the organization. The researcher used the interview schedule to guide her in the questions. Opportunities were given for the probing and clarification of certain responses. The interviewees agreed to be tape-recorded.

The data was content analyzed. Content analysis is conducted by "identifying, coding, categorizing the primary patterns in the data" (Patton, 1990, p. 381). The data from the interview was first arranged into topics or files. The information was edited and redundancies were sorted out and parts were fitted together. The recurring themes in the data became the topics. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher collected information from multiple sources, reviewed documents, and conducted observations. After the analysis of the data, member checks were done with the participants to verify the findings.

Description of Participants. The supervisors' ages ranged from 27 to 58 years. One had recently completed her MS in Human Resource Management and one had a BS. The other three

had completed high school. Their overall supervisory experience ranged from two and a half years to ten years. At this organization, their supervisory experience ranged from two and a half years to seven years. They supervised between eight and 65 workers. Three of the participants were married, one was single and one was divorced. Three of the participants had children. Their ages ranged from one and a half to 40 years.

The new supervisors held different positions with the organizations. Two were hired as supervisors, while the other three started out in various associate positions. One worked as a supervisor for various departments, while the other was hired into the department in which she currently serves as supervisor. The supervisors had diverse working backgrounds in the garment and retail industry before securing their present jobs. Their previous jobs included inventory receiving, customer service, staff assistant, packing and shipping, word processing, and inventory taker. Eighty percent of the supervisors were hired as front-line employees. Twenty percent were hired at the supervisory level.

The supervisors attributed much of their success in their current role to holding positions similar to ones held by people they supervised. The supervisors explained that their previous jobs helped them to gain the necessary experience and skills to succeed at various levels and in various departments in the organizations. They learned the operation of the organization, and enhanced their interpersonal and communication skills enabling them to interact with other staff members and management. They also learned responsibility and commitment. For example, one supervisor stated, "Now that I am a supervisor over a section that helps the warehouse, my previous job gave me the warehouse experience and helped me to see all aspects of the operations. It gave me important background information."

Findings

The findings of the study are presented with reference to the questions which guided the research. The questions were presented four major sections: career development, motivation, barriers and facilitators.

Perceptions of Career Development. The participants were asked to explain how they obtained their present job.

Attitude of Others. A number of themes emerged concerning the attitudes of others in the organization. These included the respect of peers and their attitudes related to the supervisory position. They expressed the challenge of gaining the trust and confidence of their previous peers who are now their employees. One supervisor stated, "I started working with them, and at some point I became their supervisor. I think people have a preconceived notion on how you are going to treat them when you become a supervisor." Another supervisor expressed, "I think a lot of time in this business that unless you are directly linked to making money for the company, you do not get respect."

One sentiment expressed by all the participants was that they were always proving themselves to management. One supervisor stated, "I always felt that I had to be better than the rest. I always had to prove that I was on top of things. You cannot give 90% because people will say you got the job because of Affirmative Action." The participants perceived that they had to perform 150% above their white counterparts to be considered worthy of their positions. There is a heightened awareness of how their actions affect others, and how other's perceptions affect them.

How Opportunities are Afforded. Each participant demonstrated self-initiated behavior to seek out and pursue job advancement opportunities. There was an unstructured process of encouragement with the exception of job posting activities. When they learned of a job opportunity, they completed the necessary paperwork and executed follow-up activities. They all expressed receiving encouragement and support from their former manager or supervisor. Eighty percent of the participants received job rotation. One supervisor stated, "I was placed on various jobs and worked in different areas, and different positions, and I did a good job. I got a good report back from my supervisor on my work, attitude and personality, so when another job came up I applied for it and got it. I learned about computers and became a trainer, from there I was placed on special assignments and wrote manuals....I mastered each job and moved on the next. When I was in my eight year with the company, I had already worked twenty one jobs."

The participants were self-taught. One stated, "The things that I have learned, I took the initiative to go out and take that risk to learn the things that I needed." They took the initiative to find out available training and development workshops and seminars opportunities, "I found seminars and workshops that I was interested in." They were not afraid to ask questions and learn from others. They took the time to find out about opportunities and learn the organization's culture and policies. One supervisor stated, "I learned by listening and doing. Whenever I wanted to learn about something, I bought the book and learned."

The participants self-initiated their career development process by pursuing information on training and development. The human resource department also offered unstructured approach to supervisory development with job rotation as the main tool.

Motivation. Each participant was asked to identify the main factors that contributed to their success on their job.

Intrinsic Factors. The supervisors were essentially satisfied with their present positions, but may consider mid-level positions if offered. Most satisfied were the ones who worked for the organization for over 10 years. All the supervisors stated that the main factors that have kept them motivated are their service and commitment to others and to the job. Eighty percent acknowledged that they enjoyed working with others and wanted to see them succeed. Eighty percent declared the challenges of the job keep them motivated. This is especially true when they have the tools and support to succeed. They had also set personal goals for themselves and these goals have kept them motivated.

Career Planning. A common theme amongst the participants was that they had a strong focus on their careers. They were actively involved in taking classes, reading materials related to their field and involving themselves in workshops and seminars to enhance their skills. The two participants with college degrees appeared to have the greatest amount of determination in achieving mid- and senior-level status.

The participants' involvement in training activities and commitment to keeping abreast of the job issues affecting them were factors that show a high level of motivation. They were preparing themselves for greater responsibility and reward.

Factors serving as Barriers. Each participant was asked to identify the barriers from front-line worker to first-line supervisor.

Lack of opportunity. Two issues emerged on the lack of opportunity. One was the issue of an informal, unstructured career development and preparation process, and secondly, the perception that African-American women are outsiders of that process. They perceived there are limited opportunities for the women to progress through the organization. They also perceived the organization as belonging to the "old boy's network" whereby all minorities are excluded in achieving executive management status.

Discrimination. These women had strong perceptions that African-Americans always have to prove themselves because they are fighting against negative stereotypes. They explained that the organization has not made any attempt to implement diversity program to dispel stereotypes and negative images of minorities. Eighty percent of the participants reported that they have encountered discrimination on their jobs due to race. The women noted that sexual discrimination was not a major concern for them.

Inadequate Supervisor Preparation. The human resource department relied on informal and unstructured preparation for the career development of its' employees. The supervisors do not have a sense of what the organization wants or expects from them. Their perception of the training programs that are offered was that they are not comprehensive and do not address their needs. Although the participants in this study possessed self-confidence, high aspirations, and solid skills and experience, 60% do not necessarily want to advance to mid-management positions.

The workers depended on their own initiatives to seek out information on training and development programs both internal and external to the organization. They conducted a self needs assessment to enable them to become better equipped at supervision, and to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to progress through the organization.

Lack of Well Articulated Requirements. The female supervisors sensed that people who are deserving of jobs are not getting them. This seemed to be the result of management not clearly articulating and defining the criteria for promotion. Sixty percent of the supervisors perceived that

management tends to overlook associates who do have a college degree. However, the other 40% who have college degrees also felt that management neglected to promote African-American regardless of education and experience. An important theme that is expressed by 80% of supervisors is that management may attempt to set people up for failure, by promoting them to jobs that they are inadequately prepared to perform.

Factors that Facilitate Career Development. Each participant was asked to identify the factors that facilitated their career development.

Personal Characteristics. The women believed that their strong work ethic and experience helped them the most. Their high self esteem and perseverance were also key factors. One supervisor stated, "I believe you have to give your all even if it is something you don't like. You should always give 110%. I always gave 200%, because I know that one day I will be rewarded." They also believed that their interpersonal and communication skills such as the ability to work on a team and confer with various levels of management were important factors.

Experience/Education. The women believed that their background in the retail industry assisted their progression in the organization. Their tenure ranged from five years to 23 years. They possessed the technical skills, knowledge of the organization and good track records. The 40% who have college degrees attributed that as a factor in facilitating their careers. Though the participants were experienced and learned what they needed to do progress in the organization, if there are limited in their experience they were less likely to learn what is needed to progress.

Mentor. Mentoring is important to the development of supervisors and their advancement in the organization. Not only does it provide support, but also challenges and provide much needed education, experience and influence in the quest for a rewarding job as a supervisor. Eighty percent of the women had mentors who encouraged and supported them. The mentors gave them information on the organization. The mentors also shared personal experiences with the organization. They taught them how to manage and organize their work. They taught most of what they know. The mentors were individuals who they trusted, respected and who had high integrity. One supervisor's mentor was an African-American male, one had a whiter male, one had an African-American female, and two had white females.

Factors necessary for Success. The participants were asked to identify factors that are important for them to succeed

Process Used to Prepare for Career Progression. Even though the organization believed in promoting from within, some of the women believed that education is important to progress to certain levels of management. Also education provides easier access. They advised potential supervisors to take advantage of all workshops and seminars the organization offers. They should also attend seminars outside of the organization.

Opportunity to Progress. It is necessary for women to take the initiative to learn about the organizational culture, and the opportunities that exist. It is worthwhile to find out what the organization looks for in a supervisor and get the skills, experience or education needed. The women should be responsible for their actions and to know people they work with. It is also necessary to build rapport and gain the respect and trust of management, colleagues, and associates.

Work. They recommended that the tasks, including the undesirable ones, should be performed well. They perceived hard work is important to achieve some level of respect. One should be prepared to start at the bottom because a college degree does not guarantee you immediate considerations for management.

Success after Progression into Possession. The female first-line supervisors believed that the HRD should identify the gaps between the required competencies of the supervisors and the measured knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the supervisors. Then HRD should devise a plan and supervisory training based on these needs. The participants postulated that HRD should provided training or supervisor and managers on how to relate subordinates. They also expressed concern on the lack of ongoing supervisory and technical training. Diversity training is also essential so that everyone can appreciate different cultures and background. The organization should find out the capabilities of the individuals and select people fairly and equitably.

Supervisory Forums. The participants agreed that HRD should hold meetings with supervisor so that they can voice concerns and these meetings will also provide opportunities to

learn from each other's experiences. They support the view that management should get input from minorities as to what can help to improve the efficiency of the organization. The participants recommended communication regarding changes should be done regularly and it should be consistent at all levels, especially with rules and regulations. They challenged management to communicate with employees and to explore ideas on improving the organization.

Conclusions

HRD should better articulate requirements for moving front-line workers to positions of leadership. Training and development efforts were not considered important factors to assist in the career progression of this group of women. They were not necessary and the efforts were perceived to be biased in favor of white women and men. The women perceived that the career development efforts of the organization have failed to address their needs. They viewed the organization as being uncommitted to growth and development of their employees, especially African-American women. Research has shown that when African-Americans feel a part of the social structure, or feel supported, they tend to have better employment experiences. For example, Burke (1991) found that among 81 minority managers and professionals employed in organizations that were supportive of minorities were more satisfied with and committed to their organizations. These minority managers also participated in more useful development and training activities and had more optimistic career aspirations.

HRD does not encourage participation in educational and training programs and does not inform them about job opportunities within the company. Promotions that were offered to them were viewed with distrust. They believed that the organization wants to see them fail by offering them jobs for which they are ill-prepared. The women in the study have worked long and hard at the operational level before moving into first-line supervisory levels, but have plateaued at those positions. Research has shown that African-American women have held steady and have lagged behind white women in moving into middle-management positions (Howard-Vital, 1993).

The organization should take a more active approach to career development by promoting opportunities advancement and encouraging full use of educational benefits. Seeking opportunities should be a shared responsibility between the organization and the supervisor (Noe et al., 1994). The first-line supervisor face a multifaceted learning experience. The embedded group theory is displayed here that the organizations supports the value of the larger population, and this send the message of how the organization communicates with minorities (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1990). According to Crandall (1988) organizations must develop an environment that will provide different formal and informal experiences, group sessions and individual counseling for all employees.

The study also suggested that the main sources of motivation for the women are external to the work environment. These include reliance upon family and organizations such as the church and the Urban League. The women showed commitment to the people they supervised and the opportunity to work with these individuals was an important motivating factor. The researcher found this to be interesting that they did not consider wages nor commitment to work as motivating factor. The motivation displayed by these women is intrinsic in nature and is defined as the "extent to which workers are motivated for reasons other than financial rewards" (Lawler, 1973, p. 50). The results of the study showed that the supervisors found their jobs interesting and challenging and were willing to stay in that capacity.

The participants agreed that mentors facilitated their career progress. Three of the women had mentors of the same ethnic background of which one was of the same gender. The other two had mentors who were white and female, or white and male. The literature suggested that there is a lack of mentors for African-American women because their numbers are still few in management positions (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). According to Howard-Vital (1993), mentors tend to select protégés persons who are of the same gender and who share with themselves a number of social and cultural attributes or background such as race, ethnicity, religion and social class.

The literature suggested that mentoring relationships are needed for the successful advancement for women in organizations (Ragins, 1989; Fagenson, 1993). The literature also suggested that same sex and same race mentoring are more effective than cross-sex and cross race

mentoring (Thomas, 1989). When race and gender factors are considered, a different set of consequences often emerged. It has been found that cross-race relationships take longer to initiate, are more likely to end in an unfriendly fashion, and provide less psycho-social support than same race relationships (Thomas, 1989). However, the dilemma that exists for African-American women is that there are few of them in management positions (Ragins, 1989). Therefore, African-American women experience taboos across gender and race and they are the most difficult to sustain (Thomas, 1989). Contrary to the literature, the participants spoke highly of their cross-sex and cross-race mentors and had described their experiences as rewarding and fulfilling.

Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1988) found differences in career success based on gender and race, with African-American women having more negative experiences than any other group. This study suggests that barriers still exist for the African American women. Racism is the main barrier cited, followed by gender. Studies have suggested that women and minorities receive less social support, encounter more stressful situations, report more treatment discrimination, and perceive less opportunity for advancement than do their white male counterparts. (Copeland, 1988). It is reasonable to think that people are motivated to work more productively when they believe they can be more successful. Organizations that fail to make appropriate changes to more successfully use and keep employees from different backgrounds can expect to suffer a significant competitive disadvantage than those organizations that do. The bottom line is lost profit.

HRD needs to recognize the lack of adequate career development strategies and insensitivity to cultural and racial differences. In doing so, management should develop systematic policies to help eliminate them. The barriers noted here are those recognized by numerous researchers as the ones affecting other women (Fagenson, 1994; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). Some of the barriers are unique to African-American women.

This study revealed that this group of African-American women must still contend with the issues of sexism and racism. A recent study confirmed that a more subtle form of racism exists in the American workplace (Brief, Buttram, Reizenstein, Pugh, Callahan, McCline, & Vaslow, 1997). These issues, however have not deterred them for exploring and taking advantage of the opportunities presented, and remaining steadfast in their aspirations.

Implications for HRD Research

It is clear that additional research is required to clarify the concerns of female first-line supervisors. I therefore propose a research agenda that will expound on the career development of first-line supervisors.

This pilot study revealed some interesting issues facing first-line supervisors, specifically African-American women. The study utilized a sample of five women and this by itself is limiting. It is clear that additional research is required to clarify the relationship among race and gender, management, and job performance. In addition, research is needed to clarify the advantage for organizations to advance African-American women versus women in general.

There is a plethora of information on women in management, concerning their experiences, career development strategies, barriers, and facilitators. This focus maybe due to the fact women made up 42% of all management positions in 1992 (Larwood & Wood, 1995), whereas 3% were found in senior management positions (Marlow, Marlow, Arnold, 1995). The low number has generated interest in women who are in mid- to senior- level positions. However, there is a paucity of information regarding women in first-line supervisory positions. There is also little research of information regarding African-American women in management (Hackett, Lent, and Greenhaus, 1991). Research that produce theoretical models are needed to address African-American women experiences and career development that will help us understand the different experiences of women in various aspects of management. This will also help us to understand the status of in supervisory management by addressing the ways organizations assign limited opportunities to African-American women, and addressing questions such as: Does management set African-American women up for failure?

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Human Resource Development Professionals' Perceptions of Reasons for Downsizing and Training Strategies Developed for Middle Managers

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This ex post facto study examined human resource development (HRD) training professionals' perceptions of: (1) training strategies developed for middle managers in both downsized and non-downsized organizations; and (2) the relationship between reasons causing organizations to downsize and middle management training strategies. The study surveyed 500 randomly-selected current members of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). Results indicated that downsizing had little impact on training strategies participating organizations developed for their middle managers.

Downsizing is an extremely relevant issue to organizations today, in that it has become the most prevalent dilemma within corporate America in recent years (Labib & Appelbaum, 1994). Over 2.2 million Americans were laid off between January, 1990 and December, 1994 (Serwer, 1995). The composition of these unemployed workers revealed that the majority (65%) were managers, professionals, and staff. Annual surveys by the American Management Association (AMA) showed that over two thirds of their member firms downsized between 1988 and 1993, and that, although middle managers make up about 8% of the total U.S. workforce, they accounted for 20% of the reductions (Hecksher, 1995). There are numerous issues that an organization should address during the downsizing planning phase that pertain to its economic and institutional environments, cost/benefit considerations, legal obligations, human resource responsibilities, and implied ethical commitments to society. Frequently, downsized organizations disregard the importance of the work load or tasks previously assigned to the former (laid-off) middle managers. There are only three alternatives—these tasks have to be either retained, outsourced, or eliminated. Some degree of work force training is implied in each of these alternatives.

Downsizing Defined

Organizational downsizing refers to a planned or conscious set of activities undertaken by top management of an organization designed to improve organizational efficiency, productivity, and/or competitiveness (Cameron, 1994). Downsizing has four major attributes that define the concept and give the term a unique quality:

- Is a planned or conscious set of activities that implies organizational action,
- Usually involves reductions in personnel,
- Focuses on improving the efficiency of the organization, and
- Directly affects tasks or work processes (p. 193).

Problem Statement

Unfortunately, the current trend finds many organizations more concerned with downsizing and eliminating workers and eschewing the opportunity to develop their remaining employees as valuable resources (Vincour, 1994). Companies tend to reduce their work force, but do not reorganize the work. What is needed in the downsizing process is a provision for training surviving employees to

help them adapt to the new structure. On a positive note, Sheets and Ting (1988) surveyed 407 domestic organizations and found a positive correlation between the presence of in-house training and the time frame required for surviving employees to adapt to the new organization structure.

Little is known about the success of training strategies developed for middle managers in downsized organizations. This scarcity of knowledge is particularly glaring when comparing middle managers' training strategies in organizations that have reduced the total number of middle managers with those that have not. Even less is known about relationships that may exist between the reasons an organization downsizes and training strategies developed for its middle managers.

Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of this study was to examine HRD professionals' perceptions of (1) training strategies developed for middle managers in organizations that reduced the total number of middle managers, compared and contrasted with training strategies in those organizations that did not reduce the number of middle managers; and (2) the relationship between reasons compelling an organization to reduce the number of middle managers and training strategies (task retraining, task cross-training, and developmental training) designed for middle managers. The rationale for selecting middle managers is that they are viewed as the operational core holding the business together at a practical level, whereas top managers think long-term. Unfortunately, the wave of downsizing sweeping through corporate America has generated a lesser opinion of the middle manager's worth. Heckscher (1995) studied middle managers in eight large organizations over a four-year period (1989-1993) and reported that, in general, corporate America generally regarded middle managers as the "snow tire around their waist" (p. 28). In other words, in many companies, they were considered to be excess fat that could be excised without damaging the organization. Heckscher's research revealed that the job security of middle managers was often a casualty of organizational downsizing.

For middle managers, the shift from their traditional roles of planning and control to responsibilities that demand both flexibility and speed may signal the end of an era. Kodak Corporation was a classic example of this change in management environment, as they slashed 12,000 positions, most of them in middle-management during a four-year period (1988 through 1992). As justification, Kodak's top management cited a need to remove layers of management in order to move closer to the customer.

Research Questions

This research study examined training professionals' perceptions of training strategies developed for middle managers in downsized organizations. The study was structured to address the following research questions derived from the literature review.

1. Do training strategies differ for organizations that did reduce the total number of middle managers as compared with those that did not?
2. In comparing downsized and non-downsized organizations, is there a difference in the kinds of training support programs needed to enhance the interface between training strategies and specific curricula developed for middle managers?
3. Do reasons for reducing the number of middle managers influence the training strategies developed for middle managers in a downsized organization?
4. Which middle-management training strategies are prevalent in downsized organizations?
5. Do downsized organizations develop training strategies to link the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of middle managers to the organization's efficiency and profitability goals?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Based on the perceptions of HRD professionals, there is a significant difference in middle management training strategies developed in organizations that reduced the total number of middle managers when compared with similar training strategies developed in organizations that did not reduce the number of middle managers.

Hypothesis 2: Based on perceptions of HRD professionals, there is a relationship between reasons causing an organization to reduce the total number of middle managers and training strategies developed to train surviving middle managers.

Description Of Population

The population from which the study was drawn was limited to HRD training professionals randomly selected from 500 organizations currently listed as active members of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). The random population of training professionals selected was further stratified to exclude ASTD members from academic institutions, consulting organizations, and off-shore (non-U.S.) locations. Training professionals who participated in this study had access to information on training strategies provided for middle managers and possessed some general knowledge of reasons driving the decision to reduce middle managers. Of the 500 organizations surveyed, 308 training professionals responded—194 from downsized organizations and 114 from non-downsized organizations.

Methodology

This study used both an ex post facto design, with hypotheses and correlational methodology. The data collected on these variables focused on middle management training strategies to determine if there is a relationship among the reasons causing the organizations to reduce middle management positions.

The independent variable is the decision to downsize. This decision has five levels. The first level is a decision not to downsize or restructure (R_0). R_0 : Since January, 1990, the organization has not reduced the total number of middle managers. For the purpose of this study, there are four separate levels or reasons why an organization decided to downsize (reduce the number of middle managers).

These reasons identified by Louis Harris & Associates (1991) are defined below:

R_1 : Change in business strategy/core competencies. Company decided to divest a portion of the organization/ product line and/or made a conscious decision to vacate a market segment. This decision included closing facilities/plants, centralization and/or transferring work, thereby reducing the need for middle managers.

R_2 : A response to increased/stronger competition. Direct competitors gained larger market share through lower prices, aggressive marketing, and/or more advanced technology, i.e., global competition opened markets to stronger competitors that caused a downturn in business. Fewer middle managers were needed.

R_3 : A direct acquisition/merger/consolidation. Company was acquired by, merged with, or consolidated into another organization. Eliminated duplicate job responsibilities.

R_4 : To improve efficiency/profitability. Due to reasons, not listed above, there was a direct reduction of operational costs. The reduction in costs was achieved through a direct layoff of middle managers, i.e., a reduction in the layers of management. The primary driver was a need to increase profits with no other discernible mitigating factors (p. 3).

The dependent variable is middle management training strategies defined as curricula/programs designed to improve performance on the job. It addresses middle managers' knowledge, skills, and behavior, and generally has short range impact. The dependent variable (T_1 - T_3) has three separate curricula/program levels defined as:

T_1 Task Retraining: Traditional job-skill specific training of an employee to perform unfamiliar tasks—a one-for-one change of managers. Training a middle manager to effectively

perform the same job responsibilities assigned to the immediate predecessor.

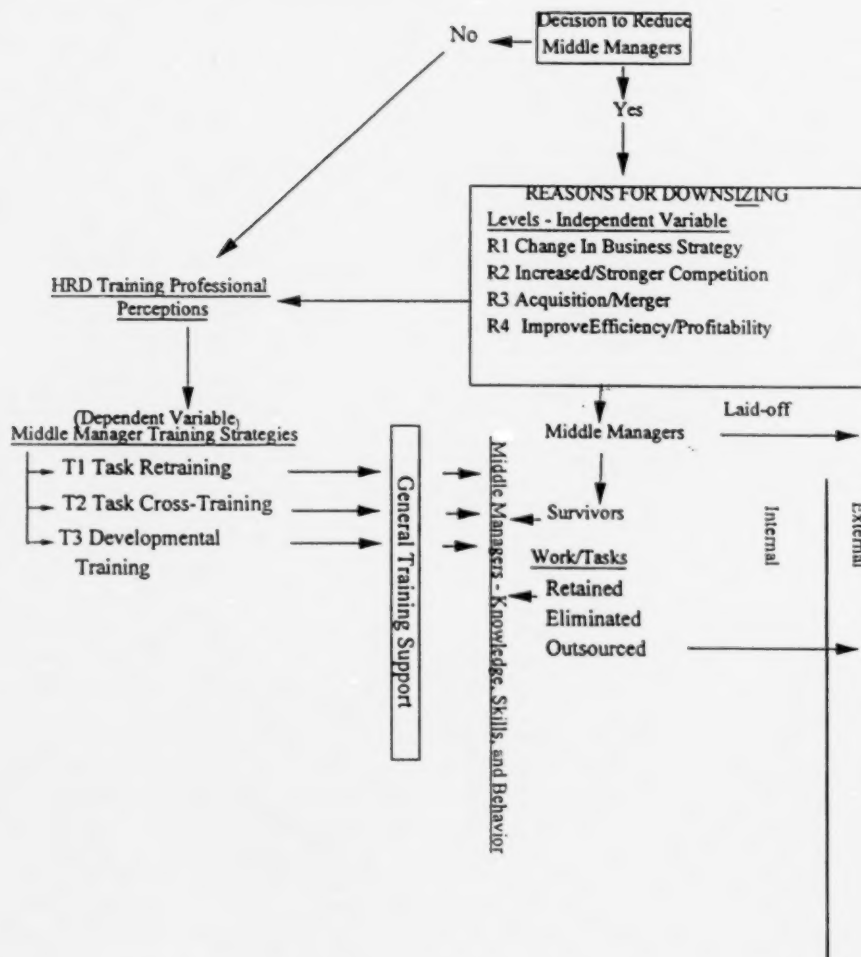
T₂ Task Cross-Training: Training to provide a general working knowledge of various functions, which implies the capability to effectively perform a broad range of tasks.

T₃ Developmental Training: Training that focuses on understanding organizational issues like core competencies, total quality management, career pathing/development, team building, and diversity needed by middle managers to effectively perform their assigned tasks.

Research Model

The model Middle-management Training Environment (see Figure 1) illustrates training interactions within an organization following an initial yes-or-no decision to reduce the total number of middle managers.

Figure 1 - Research Model Middle Management Training Environment



If the organization decides not to reduce middle managers (independent variable), there is no need to explain details supporting this decision. Therefore, training professionals responding from organizations that have not downsized provided only their perceptions of the training strategies

developed for middle managers (dependent variable). On the other hand, training professionals responding from organizations that have downsized (reduced the total number of middle managers) provided both their perceptions of the reasons for the reduction in manpower (independent variable), and training strategies developed for surviving middle managers (dependent variable). As illustrated by the model, when an organization reduces the number of middle managers, the work load or tasks assigned to laid-off middle managers will have to be either retained, eliminated, or outsourced.

Statistical Analysis

In order to test Hypothesis 1, variation within and between each group (downsized vs. non-downsized) was statistically analyzed yielding an f value. This calculation was supported by a non-directional two-tailed test for significance. This study specified a .05 level of significance that requires that 5% of the total responses include both tails. The statistical test for significance includes the mean, standard deviation, f value, and a pooled variance estimate that computes a t test— t value, degrees of freedom, and a 2-tailed probability. For each item in the instrument, a t test for independent means was used to determine if the difference between the means of two samples was significant.

Hypothesis 2 examined the relationship among training professionals' perceptions of the reasons for downsizing and training strategies developed for middle managers. This statistical examination was accomplished with a one-way (1x4) ANOVA as a measure of observed differences for each of the 25 survey items. When the f ratio was significant (less than .05 is significant), Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was used to determine which mean(s) was significantly different from the others.

Results And Conclusions

Findings of the study indicate no difference in training strategies among organizations that *did* reduce the total number of middle managers as compared with those that *did not*. HRD training professionals from both downsized and non-downsized organizations reported more extensive use of developmental training (T_3) than either task retraining (T_1), or task cross training (T_2) when designing training strategies for their middle managers. A middle management developmental training (T_3) curriculum can emphasize the understanding of broader issues important to the organization, as opposed to narrow task-related training initiatives. Developmental training (T_3) allows an organization to both shape and reinforce those middle managers' knowledge, skills, and behavior needed to support the organization's mission, goals, and objectives. This study concluded that a relatively small number of the responding organizations formally cross-trained (T_2) middle managers.

Analysis of responses indicated that training professionals from downsized organizations reported less extensive middle management training initiatives than did training professionals from non-downsized organizations. Sixty-two percent of their total scores recorded in the survey were either 1-no extent or 2-very little extent on the Likert scale. By comparison, training professionals from non-downsized organizations recorded, relatively fewer of their total scores (47%) in the 1-no extent or 2-very little extent, range on the Likert scale.

There was a significant difference among responses regarding the development of a clearly defined training strategy for middle managers. HRD professionals from non-downsized organizations tended to have a clearly defined middle management training strategy in place, whereas responding HRD professionals from downsized organization indicated they had not developed extensive training strategies for their middle managers.

Based on this study, training professionals from organizations that downsized because of a merger or acquisition (R_1) tend to provide a higher level of training support for their middle managers, when compared to other downsized organizations. Organizations that downsized solely to reduce costs (R_4) tended to develop minimal training curricula for their middle managers. Based on the findings of this study, many HRD training professionals from R_2 organizations (downsized due to stronger competition) did not perceive a need to provide management training initiatives for middle

managers. The study found that many HRD training professionals from those organizations that downsized due to a change in business strategy (R_1) have recognized and developed curricula to support both the "knowledge worker" and "specialists" in middle management. Most of the training professionals from downsized organizations did not develop training curricula to help middle managers cope with personal apprehensions (i.e. fear, distrust, insecurity, and anger) following a restructuring of the organization.

Contribution To New Knowledge In HRD

The study is one of the first to research perceptions of HRD professionals in downsized organizations concerning the relationship between reasons for downsizing and training strategies developed for middle managers. This information should be useful to HRD professionals in both downsized and non-downsized organizations. HRD professionals from those organizations that downsized to reduce costs should carefully consider the results of this study to guide the development of an effective training curriculum for their middle managers. The data indicated that HRD professionals with downsized organizations generally have not recognized a need to develop middle management training strategies. This support may require that training professionals partner with line management in the development and implementation of an effective middle management training strategies that directly supports the organization's mission, goals, and objectives. The implication is that HRD professionals may have to become more assertive within downsized organizations to make company executives aware of the benefits of developing the climate, culture, and competence required to facilitate the transformation of their remaining middle managers into a cohesive team.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research should be conducted to extend the findings of this study. Specific recommendations include:

- Longitudinally assess costs/benefits of cutting or eliminating HRD training budgets in downsized organizations. That study should analyze the complex problems that result from the emergent uninformed and self-educated middle managers.
- Assess middle management training initiatives that were developed in organizations that downsized due to a merger/acquisition. Do they establish a common language, shared agendas, and congruency between organizations' business and training strategies? How is program effectiveness measured?
- Assess the need for training strategies that can help surviving middle managers cope with personal apprehensions or stress associated with restructuring.
- Assess the need for training surviving middle managers in downsized organizations. Do their training needs and expectations differ from predownsized structures? Does downsizing cause a change in training curricula for middle managers?
- Assess task retraining of middle managers employees to determine if task-focused curricula provide the training flexibility needed to respond to a restructuring of the organization.
- Determine reasons why organizations that have not reduced middle management tend to develop training strategies for their middle managers.
- Assess the need for partnerships between line management and HRD training professionals in downsized organizations. What is the best method of identifying survivor training needs in a downsized organization?

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Perceived Leadership Style and Individual Differences as Predictors of Subordinate Information Seeking Behavior

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An argument is developed that a perceived leadership style of a superior predicts information seeking behavior of subordinates in an organizational setting. Transformational and transactional leadership theories were utilized to postulate that the content type and frequency of information sought by a subordinate from his/her superior will vary depending on that superior's leadership style. Implications are drawn for the role of information seeking for managers' development and career advancement.

Organizational environments are frequently assessed, at least in part, on the amount of uncertainty they instill in organizational life (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Thompson, 1967). The expectation of change and change itself contribute to the level of uncertainty of each individual in the organization by increasing the difference between the amount of information required for individuals' organizational well-being and the amount of information these individuals already possess. Because information reduces feelings of uncertainty (Berger, 1979; Crawford, 1974), and because uncertainty and change are common organizational realities, individuals need information consistently. Thus, the underlying assumption is that information insufficiency yields information search activities, and it comes as no surprise that information seeking has come to the fore of researchers' and practitioners' interest in the management field.

It is almost impossible to provide but a vague definition of information seeking that would capture each of the various perspectives, assumptions, and research interests that stem from decision making, social psychology, management information systems, and organizational behavior and communication areas. Information seeking in this paper is regarded as and limited to represent an integral part of interpersonal superior-subordinate communication. An important part of what managers do is to act as a source of information to their subordinates, and a variety of information types in regard to content are important, and often crucial, to subordinates' well-being. Subordinates seek information to obtain useful insights related to their work, as well as to reduce uncertainty about their work and themselves (Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1993a, Mullen, 1994). Following on the basic premise from the feedback seeking behavior (FSB) literature that individuals consciously devote effort toward determining the adequacy and correctness of their behaviors (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford, 1986), we assume that employees will, under certain conditions, exhibit a proactive seekers' mode. Subordinates' perceptions of who their superiors are and what are their goals and motives are likely to appear as a crucial determinant of their proactive behaviors such as information seeking. Further, information seeking patterns are likely to, in turn, influence their task performance, affect their relationship with their superior, as well as their attitudes toward the organization (Morrison, 1993a). The questions addressed in this paper concentrate on the information seeking process. More specifically, the frequency and types of information sought by the subordinate from his/her superior and the antecedents thereof are the primary foci of this investigation.

In their studies of newcomer information seeking, Morrison (1993a, 1993b) and Miller & Jablin (1991) have combined feedback seeking with other information seeking types relevant to newcomers in the process of socialization. Their extended typologies are used here to the extent that the types are relevant to a subordinate throughout his/her tenure. Similar types have been utilized beyond the socialization context (e.g., Mullen's (1994) work on mentoring relationships). The information types included here are: technical and referent information regarding questions about something in the task or environment; and social feedback and performance feedback, with the distinction between outcome and process feedback (Earley, Northcraft, Lee, & Lituchy, 1990), all regarding questions about self. Technical information seeking encompasses questions about

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how to perform certain aspects of a job/task. Among the reasons for search of technical information are: defining a problem/task; learning techniques applicable to dealing with the problem/task; finding solutions; as well as identifying a specific piece of missing data (Kaufman, 1983). Referent information type pertains to questions about role demands and expectations of a subordinate. Although particularly useful at the socialization stage, this type seems equally relevant to an employee throughout his/her tenure, in typically uncertain and rapidly changing environments. Information about self includes: performance feedback as it relates to questions about how well a subordinate is performing at work; and social feedback as it relates to questions about the acceptability of subordinate's social behavior at work. Outcome performance feedback provides only information on performance outcomes, while process performance feedback is provided to facilitate employees' performance by assisting in their search of effective task strategies (Earley et al., 1990).

Apart from a few rare exceptions, (Ang, Cummings, Straub, & Earley, 1993; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995), a superior who is also a feedback/information giver has been conceptualized as a "generic" person, reflecting a uniform behavior of his/her kind. This lack of research on the effects of a superior's style is paradoxical, especially in the light of abundance of studies in which a strong relationship between a leadership style and follower satisfaction and performance has been found (e.g., Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, & Weick, 1970; Crowe, Bochner, & Clark, 1972). Furthermore, by identifying inference, face loss, and effort costs of feedback seeking behavior in their pivotal work, Ashford & Cummings (1983) have implicitly invited research on the superior - feedback seeking behavior interaction. Broader literature on information sources has often qualified personal sources as most important to individuals in organizations (Buzanell, 1987). Further, some research suggests that the most important among personal sources are immediate supervisors (Ashford, 1993; Goldhaber, Yates, Porter, & Lesniak, 1978). Supervisors have been found to be an employees' major link to the information environment and it has been shown that their feedback was most useful in assessing employees' current status and potential for advancement within the organization (Walsh, Ashford, & Hill, 1985). The source attributes typically discussed are source accessibility, conceived as "the ease of obtaining the information" (O'Reilly, 1982), and source quality, encompassing attributes such as overall credibility and reliability (O'Reilly, 1983), honesty (Liska, 1978), sensibility (Zmud, 1978), and reward power (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995), among others. There is, however, no evidence of field research that deals with source attributes in general, and with superior attributes in particular. In fact, with the rare exception of the Ang et al. (1993) study looking at the relationship between a superior's mood and subordinates' feedback seeking behavior in a laboratory experiment, no work has been done to determine the influence of superior's attributes on subordinates' information seeking behavior, or to, at least, offer a list of this source's potential attributes that uniquely pertain to information seeking. I suggest that subordinates often experience their superiors in a more holistic way, and therefore do not, in general, perceive each of their individual attributes individually, in their regular interaction. It therefore seems plausible that a larger picture of a superior, such as his/her style of leadership, may, in large part, determine a seeker's regular information seeking pattern. Many of the source attributes mentioned above may simply be subsumed under this larger, more encompassing dimension. I propose that transformational and transactional leadership theories are helpful in search of such evidence. The following is a brief description of the basic premises of these two theories.

Building on the work of Weber (1923/1947) and House (1977), Bass (1985), in his transformational leadership theory, explores the concept of charisma as an interaction phenomenon and operationalizes it through attribution and behavior. Unlike Burns (1978) who envisioned transformational and transformational leadership as two ends of the same continuum, Bass claimed that the two are conceptually distinct phenomena, although they may be displayed by the same leader. The thrust of Bass' theory is summarized as follows.

The aim of a transformational leader is to arouse the needs of followers in accordance with the leader's own goals, the final result being performance beyond expectations. Self-reinforcement becomes a key motivator of a subordinate's behavior. Although, theoretically, they can be found at any level of any organization, transformational leaders are more likely to emerge during crises and in times of social change, as clear norms, and overly structured environments can pose an obstacle to their existence (Bass, 1985). The leader-follower relationship is regarded

as one of mutual stimulation (Deluga, 1988). The style is characterized and posited to be a composite score from three dimensions: *charisma* (fundamental dimension, described in respect to how followers perceive and react toward the leader. Its subdimensions are: attributed charisma, idealized influence, and inspiration); *individual consideration* (implying that attention is being paid to the subordinate in the form of mentoring, and developmental orientation); and *intellectual stimulation* (providing the climate for the followers to question their ways, as well as those of their leader).

Transactional leadership, on the other hand, assumes exchange-based and leader-controlled relationships. The overall description of the style portrays a leader who remains quiet as long as his/her subordinates are meeting their performance standards. The style is characterized by and represents a composite score from two dimensions: *contingent reward* (rewards for the follower are based on compliance); and *management-by-exception* (resulting either in negative reinforcement or in the attitude reflected in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". One therefore differentiates between passive and active modes of this dimension).

There exists mixed empirical evidence that transformational leadership results in better performance of subordinates than does transactional leadership (e.g., Longshore, 1988; Onnen, 1987). Conclusions of some studies were that both leadership styles had strong relationship with performance indices (e.g., Curphy, 1992). It is thus, by no means, a black and white portrayal of the two styles. Some managers may be promoted exactly because of their transactional abilities to work within the system (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The only finding that has remained consistent across research is that the absence of leadership is seen uniformly as being ineffective and dissatisfying for followers (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Transformational and Transactional Leadership: In Search of the Effect on Subordinates' Information Seeking Patterns

Through mentoring, one-on-one contact, and intellectual stimulation, a perceived transformational leadership style lowers all three types of costs of information seeking proposed by Ashford and Cummings (1983)—inference, face loss, and effort costs. A subordinate can infer leader's motives more easily, the leader is more accessible (Kaufmann, 1983; O'Reilly, 1982; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995), and negative reinforcement is not exercised by the leader. Thus, we can expect a more involved information seeking activity on the part of a subordinate.

Proposition 1: Perception of a superior's leadership style will add to the prediction of the frequency of information sought by a subordinate in that frequency will be higher if a superior is perceived as a transformational, rather than transactional leader.

Face loss costs in seeking performance feedback as well as social feedback from a perceived transactional leader seem exceptionally high, due to high probability of negative reinforcement. This will negatively influence the amount of information sought. The evidence of subordinates' reluctance to seek performance feedback in case of poor performance or perception of unmet expectations has been well established (Larson, 1989; Morrison & Cummings, 1992). On the other hand, the style seems to encourage seeking technical and referent information, as they are distanced from self. Technical information is typically task-related and does not involve feelings or judgements. Seeking referent information can be regarded as a preparation for, or a confirmation of, an exchange-based (i.e., transactional) relationship.

Proposition 2: The frequency of seeking technical and referent information from a transactional leader will be higher than the frequency of seeking performance and social feedback from such a leader.

Intellectual stimulation and the insistence on the continuous development exercised by a transformational leader contribute to a subordinate's interest in the process of work, not only its outputs. I propose that this attitude contributes to the amount of process performance feedback sought.

Proposition 3: The frequency of seeking process feedback, as compared to outcome performance feedback, will be higher if subordinates seek the feedback from transformational than from transactional leaders.

The Effect of Individual Difference Antecedents on the Focal Relationship

Also included in this paper's model are those individual difference constructs for which there is considerable evidence of influence on feedback/ information seeking. Following on the advice of Ajzen (1987) regarding the conceptualization of individual difference constructs, I advocate the use of their more domain-specific levels that pertain uniquely to the organizational settings.

Job Related Tolerance for Ambiguity (JRTA). JRTA (Benett, Herold, & Ashford, 1985; Norton, 1975) has been closely examined in the FSB literature. Generally, it has been found to be negatively related with feedback seeking frequency (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992). JRTA seems to be particularly important in the case of perceived transactional leadership style. This is because a subordinate-leader interaction is reduced to a minimum, and as such it provides for higher levels of the ambiguity of the situation and uncertainty about outcomes among subordinates who consequently lack referent and outcome performance feedback information.

Proposition 4: The higher the subordinates' JRTA, the more referent information and outcome performance feedback they will seek from a transactional leader, as compared to other information types.

Individual Goal Orientation--Work Domain (GO). Recent FSB-related research on goal orientation has been grounded in the work of Dweck and colleagues (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) in social cognitive psychology. VandeWalle and Cummings (1997) proposed the distinction between two types of individuals and their behaviors--those with learning goals who focus on improving their ability, and those with performance goals who focus on proving their ability, all according to their implicit theories of intelligence. VandeWalle (in press) suggested 'mid-level' domain specificity and further differentiated between academic and work goal orientation. Because learning oriented individuals seek more feedback about their work, even under challenging conditions (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997), it seems plausible that:

Proposition 5: Learning oriented subordinates will seek more process performance feedback in general than will their performance oriented peers, from both transformational and transactional leaders.

Organization-based Self-Esteem (OBSE). Many FSB studies in which global self-esteem has been proposed as an antecedent have gone unsupported (e.g., Ashford, 1986). Conversely, Van Dyne, Earley, & Cummings (1990) found a positive correlation between feedback seeking frequency and a more domain specific version--class-based self-esteem. Brockner's (1988) behavioral plasticity theory also seems to suggest that there may be significant differences in the type of information individuals seek, depending on their level of self-esteem.

It has been suggested that subordinates high in self-esteem, are less influenced by the quality of their relationship with their feedback source in deciding whether or not to seek feedback (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). On the other hand, it may be expected that subordinates with low self-esteem, needing approval and self-affirmation, as well as in search of self-diagnostics, will take advantage of the developmental support they receive from transformational leaders, and become further intimidated and alienated by the possible negative reinforcement practices of transactional leaders. In general, it is expected that OBSE, as defined by Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham (1989), will influence the relationship between subordinates' information seeking and a perceived leadership style such that:

Proposition 6: The level of subordinates' OBSE will be inversely related to the amount of information they seek from transformational leaders, and positively related to the amount of information they seek from transactional leaders.

More specifically, and according to the behavioral plasticity theory (Brockner, 1988), subordinates with low OBSE are expected to seek information that seems less costly and does not have the potential to further deteriorate their sense of self-identity.

Proposition 7: The lower the subordinates' OBSE, the more they will seek technical and referent information, rather than performance and social feedback, from both transactional and transformational leaders.

Practical Implications

Even though organizational practitioners have been acquainted with the notion of transformational and transactional leadership for almost a decade, the concepts have hardly been considered in the context of follower/subordinate information seeking. The propositions suggested in this paper should broaden this leader categorization by including a view of each leader type as an information source, rather than just an information provider. The initial task, however, is to fully develop and implement training and OD efforts to make headway in the direction based on the pivotal assumption that subordinates are proactive in their search for adequate information.

If the propositions indeed hold in empirical investigation, management training efforts should then focus on providing skills needed to link the two leadership styles and seeking a variety of information types by subordinates. Assessments preceding the design of training programs should account for consequences of not seeking certain information types in regard to the task at hand or to some salient organizational objectives, and then relate those to the existing leadership style of participants. The MLQ instrument (a shorter 1996 version, in particular) can be used for initial leader assessment. The subsequent training should ensure basic awareness of the major individual characteristics of subordinates that play a role in their seeking choices. The training efforts should also emphasize the importance of outcome and process feedback seeking differentiation, and relate it to the importance of the leadership style and goal orientation influences. Similar training should also be provided to subordinates with the general purpose of enriching their "bag of tools" when it comes to seeking information from their superior.

To enhance the organizational information environment, OD efforts should focus on the systematic investigation of the information that employees really need, the assessment of the strategies they have used to get each information type in the past, as well as what has gone wrong in the search process. Such assessment should encompass a closer look at monitoring (Ashford & Cummings, 1983), as well as other available information sources not considered in this study. Only after having such a more comprehensive assessment of the situation, can we attribute any information problem or issue to a leadership style. Otherwise, leadership training may not be the logical next step. Rather, focusing on the design and implementation of other structural interventions may be more fruitful.

Limitations and Future Research

This model is concerned only with direct inquiry methods of information seeking. Other authors have rightly noticed a variety of other modes such as monitoring (Ashford & Cummings, 1983), going through a third party (Miller & Jablin, 1991), and the like. It has been shown in the FSB literature that inquiry, as compared to monitoring, is a more costly strategy because it exposes the individual's need for feedback and this need may be seen as a sign of uncertainty or insecurity (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Our decision to limit the observation to inquiry may pose a limitation to realistically assessing feedback seeking patterns.

It should also be noted that employees are very likely to seek information from sources other than their superiors. These other sources such as co-workers; task itself; and the organization, may have varying importance to employees in regard to different types of information. It is unwise to assume that the findings on the importance of a supervisor as a feedback source hold equally for technical and referent information. Thus, any bias produced by the choice of a specific source is likely to be unequally distributed among the information types included in the study.

The questions raised here did not include assessment of the quality of acquired information. O'Reilly's (1982) attributes such as: timeliness, relevance, and specificity may be considered in future research. More generally, I did not examine the benefits of information seeking as they related to a specific leadership style. Inclusions of outcome measures such as job satisfaction, promotion, or increased recognition, would probably lead to consideration of other intervening variables, and some of the relationships shown in this model as main effects, may be seen in the context of moderation or mediation in this larger picture.

Empirical investigation of the model should be designed to utilize field setting and survey methodology. This is to maximize the exploitation of a natural environment, as well as real-time, longitudinal data collection. The following theory-driven requirements should be considered. First, all participating employees (subordinates) should belong to the same organization and perform similar tasks, to avoid data contamination and problems of morphogenesis. Second, newcomers to the organization should be excluded from the study because the socialization literature has clearly pointed to differences in the information seeking patterns between newcomers and already socialized employees. Finally, the choice of an organization should concur with the theoretical assumptions about the emergence of transformational leadership, thus searching for conditions of dynamism, crisis, change, and/or general uncertainty.

The data should be collected in two phases. In phase One, the subordinate questionnaire including the items related to the independent variables in the study would be administered and collected. Bass and Avolio (1991) 5X-rater version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is recommended for the Leadership style variable. In phase Two, at the end of each working day, subordinates would record in a behavioral checklist the type and frequency of information they sought from their superior on that day. This phase would be at least one month in duration to allow for an information seeking pattern to emerge, as well as to provide for real-time data collection. This design would also prevent the differential period problem, which occurs when past behaviors are predicted on the basis of current attitudes and perceptions.

Conclusion

Overall, I suggest that, within the boundaries described herein, superior's leadership style may have a unique effect on each of the five information types sought by subordinates. Although preliminary in scope, the proposed model provides clear directions for further efforts in investigating this interesting and salient antecedent. It also reveals the importance of the information seeking typology, as a tool for understanding the complex content-based differences within what may be considered an overly broad construct.

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